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ABSTRACT

In the New Jersey Alternate Route Program, the professional education of provisional teachers is provided by the local school district and the state department of education. A 20-day, on-the-job training period conducted by the school district qualifies the provisional teacher to take complete charge of the classroom. This study examined the amount and type of supervision provided for the provisional teachers, the type and amount of training given, the source of the training, and the level of compliance with the mandate from the state. Data were collected through a survey of provisional teachers (N=94) consisting of a set of directions and a 10-category log to be kept daily. The surveys asked the participants to keep records on the amount of time they taught each day; the amount of time they observed others teach; whether these observations were structured or unstructured; the conduct of a preobservation conference; and a critique. The number of meetings and amount of time spent with their school-based support team were also logged. Survey results indicated that the provisional teachers have not been receiving the training required by the state department of education. (JD)

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School Districts As Teacher Training Institutions in the New Jersey Alternate Route Program

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School Districts As Teacher Training Institutions in the
New Jersey Alternate Route Program

Abstract

This study analyzes the Phase I induction training received by provisional teachers from their local school districts. The study shows that the provisional teachers are not receiving the training required by the State Board of Education. The study analyzes the experiences of provisional teachers in terms of the rate of assumption of full-time teaching responsibilities; the amount and type of supervision provided; the amount and type of training provided; and the source of training supervision.

Introduction and Objectives

In the summer of 1985 the New Jersey State Department of Education initiated a radically different teacher certification program, the Provisional Teacher Program. It is different in that the professional education of the provisional teachers is provided by the local school district and the State Department of Education. There is a 20 day on-the-job training period conducted by the school district which then qualifies the provisional teacher to take complete charge of the classroom. Although quick entry into the teaching profession has been possible at other times in the profession's past, it has usually been accompanied by a higher demand for teachers than were available. This program was conceived and implemented as a true alternative whether or not there was a high demand.

The professional education program has two distinct components. There is an on-site component, i.e., at the school-site where the provisional teacher is working, and an academic component of 200 hours provided by the State Department of Education. The on-site training program consists of three phases: the first 20 days, the next 10 weeks, and the final five months. This study focused exclusively on the 20 day seminar/practicum training program which is conducted by the local school district. The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. to determine the amount and type of supervision provided;
2. to determine the type and amount of training given;

3. to determine who provided the training;
4. to determine the level of compliance with the New Jersey Administrative Code 6:11-5; 6:11-8.2.

Review of the Literature

There has been much written about alternative routes by which people could become certified as teachers. In a review of the literature available in ERIC (ERIC, 1967-1989, January), no other state has made the local school district the sole agent responsible for educating the people recommended for certification. California has a program in which the local school district may be responsible for certifying a person who wants to become a teacher but the program must be in cooperation with and approved by an institution of higher education with an approved teacher certification program in the field (Oliver & McKibbin, 1985). The program length is two to three years and is restricted to departmentalized schools, grades 6-8, and to high schools. South Carolina has also developed an alternative teacher certification program (Graham & Million, 1986). The program is restricted to areas of teaching which have declared "shortages" and are required to be in cooperation with an institution of higher education.

A research report on the New Jersey Alternate Route Program found that "training was not entirely sufficient" for the programs participants (Gray & Lynn, 1988). A survey conducted by the New Jersey Educational Association found that a significant number of alternate route teachers reported that they did not receive the required training services from the local school district (NJEA, 1986).

Another set of literature provides positions about alternative routes (Galluzo & Ritter, 1986; Culver, et al, 1986; Roth, 1986) but very little research evidence. Journal articles which review research of training systems find that formal training systems are more effective than non-training systems (Hullin-Austin, 1986; Banks & Necco, 1986).

Method

The data were gathered in September, October, and November of 1987 and 1988. The surveys were given to and collected from alternate route teachers at regional training centers conducted by Trenton State College. Participation in the research was voluntary. The centers were located at Trenton State College and at Sayreville and Edison public

schools. Because of the centers' geographic locations, the centers have a representation of urban, suburban, and rural districts, and public, private, and parochial schools. A total of 73 different schools or school districts are represented in the study. The population in the Fall of '87 is 215 with 142 in public schools and 19 in non-public schools. The total number of participants in the Fall of '88 is 238 with 160 in public schools and 78 in non-public schools (*The Provisional Teacher Program*, 1988). Teaching assignments ranged from early childhood to calculus. The data were analyzed by frequency distributions, means, and percentages.

Source of Data

The data for this study come from a survey designed to describe the training and instructional experiences of the provisional teacher during the first 20 days of the practicum/seminar training program. The survey consists of a set of directions and a daily log to be kept with 10 categories for each day. The logs were turned in every week or within one week of completing the 20 day program. Those logs which did not meet this standard were not used. Of the 94 people who completed logs in the first week, 78 were found to be complete and accurate enough to be used in the study. Of the 16 which were not used, the problems were incomplete data, blank forms, unreadable forms, or forms which did not follow the directions sufficiently to be able to be understood. The N for Week 2 was 89 usable forms, Week 3 was to 69, and week 4 had 43 usable logs.

The surveys asked the participants to keep records on the amount of time they taught each day; the amount of time they observed others teach; and whether these observations were structured or unstructured. In the third category the provisional teachers recorded how often they were observed teaching, the position of the observer;. the conduct of a pre-observation conference, and of a critique. The number of meetings and amount of time spent with their school based Support Team was also maintained.

Definition of Terms

The definitions of terms were developed to provide some standardization for analyzing the results. All time was converted to periods with five periods being the full-time teaching load as it is in the majority of schools. A period is equivalent to 45 minutes of teaching and is rounded up to or down to the closest appropriate number of periods. The definitions of compliance were developed from the interpretation of guidelines in the Handbook and from the NJ Administrative Code.

The definitions for compliance and non-compliance relative to the amount of teaching a provisional teacher does within the 20 day period of practicum/seminar is derived from the State Department of Education's interpretation of good practice; NJ Administrative Code 6:11-5.5. The definition for good practice in supervision is derived from the State Department of Education's definition as given to the colleges in New Jersey to supervise their students in conducting teacher education programs and from the New Jersey Administrative Code 6:11-7.

The Handbook makes a distinction between teachers with experience and those without experience, in applying a guideline for when a provisional teacher may begin teaching full-time. A provisional teacher who has not had any prior teaching experience is not permitted to begin teaching full-time the first day in the program. It is recommended that the first full day of teaching not occur until at least the end of the first week. A teacher who has had prior teaching experience is permitted to teach full-time the first day. In both cases the teacher must be under the constant supervision of an experienced teacher, supervisor, or administrator. Compliance will be analyzed in terms of the percentage of teachers teaching full-time the first day versus the percentage of teachers who have had previous teaching experience. Compliance will also be analyzed in terms of the amount of supervision provided to the provisional teachers.

The State Department of Education has not defined the term, "teaching experience." It is unclear if this means a person who has been a part-time substitute teacher, taught Sunday School for 10 years, or any number of other experiences which one might call teaching. In the

Provisional Teacher Program the judgment appears to be left to the local school.

Definitions:

1. One period equals 45 minutes
2. Five periods of teaching equals full-time teaching in one day; 21 periods or more equals full-time teaching for a five day week.
3. A "Pre-Observation conference" is a discussion of the lesson to be observed and takes place between the provisional teacher and the observer prior to the observation.
4. A "critique" is a post-observation conference, of any length, of the particular lesson observed.
5. An "Instructional Meeting" is any meeting provided by the local school to give instruction in the profession to the provisional teacher.
6. "Observed" is defined as having a school professional in the classroom who is a certified teacher and is assigned by the principal to work with the provisional teacher with either person in charge of the lesson. (This term may be used interchangeably with "supervised.")
7. "Prior Teaching Experience" is being under contract to teach a class for one full year.

Results

Amount of Teaching and the Amount of Supervision

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
N	78	88	69	43
Total Periods Taught	1302 (100%) 933(100%)	1801(100%)	1508(100%)	
Total Periods Observed	230(18%) 70(7%)	181(10%)	370(24%)	
Total Periods Not Observed	1072(82%) 863(93%)	1620(90%)	1138(74%)	

Compliance with Code	No	No	No	No

Table 1

Table 1 presents the amount of periods that alternate route teachers taught, the number of periods in which they were supervised, the number of periods in which they were not supervised, and whether this ratio puts them in compliance with the New Jersey Administrative Code which governs the program. The Code requires that the teachers be observed 100% of the time. Table 1 line 3, "Total Periods Not Observed" shows that for the vast majority of time the Alternate Route teachers were left alone without supervision. Line 4, "Compliance with the Code," shows that there was no compliance with the Code by the program as a whole during the four(4) weeks or 20 days of the practicum/seminar.

Teaching and
The Rate of Supervision

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Alt. Rte.Tchrs Teaching	70 (90%)	84(96%)	68(99%)	42(98%)
# Teaching Full-Time	62(79%)	67(76%)	60(87%)	40(95%)
Sup'd less than1/Day	53(68%)	57(65%)	58(84%)	35(81%)
Sup'd 100% Compliance	5(6%)	2(2%)	6(9%)	0(0%)
Not in Compliance	65(83%)	82(93%)	64(93%)	42(98%)

Table 2

Table 2, Line 1, shows the number of alternate route teachers teaching in each given week. Some of the subjects taught only two periods, others are teaching full-time. This also shows that eight(8) are not teaching in the first week, four(4) are not teaching in the second week, one(1) is not teaching in the third week, and one(1) is not teaching in the fourth week. Line 2 shows the number of Alternate Route teachers teaching full-time in any given week. Line 3 presents the data on the number who were supervised less than once per day in

any given week in which the person taught. Someone who taught two periods on two different days and was supervised only once would be in this category as well as someone who taught full-time all five days and was supervised only four(4) periods. Line 4 displays the number of people who were supervised every period that they taught. For example, one person taught two periods and was supervised both of those periods and therefore is in this category. Another person may have taught 25 periods and was supervised every period and is in this category. Another teacher who taught 25 periods but was supervised in 23 of those periods would not be in this category. Line 5 shows the number of individuals whose schools are not in compliance with the New Jersey Administrative Code.

Good Practice During Supervision

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Number Teaching	70 (90%)	84(96%)	68(99%)	42(98%)
# of Pre-Ob Conferences	15(21%)	20(246%)	15(22%)	7(17%)
# No Pre-Ob Conferences	55(79%)	64(76%)	53(78%)	35(83%)
# Received Critique	31(44%) 18(43%)	50(59%)	31(46%)	
# Received No Critique	39(56%)	34(40%)	39(54%)	24(57%)
Ave Length of Critique	5 min	6.8 min	9.25 min	5.5 min

Table 3

Table 3 represents the amount of good practice (Cooperman, 1986) used by the school district staff during supervision of the alternate route teacher. Line 1 shows that the percentage of pre-observation conferences for alternate route teachers instructing never rose above 24% in any given week and Line 3 shows that the percentage without pre-observation conferences was as high as 83%. Line 4 shows that the percentage of subjects teaching who received a critique following the lesson ranged from 18%(week 4) to 50%(week 2). Line 5 shows that in most weeks, the majority of teachers did not receive a

critique. Line 6 shows the range of average minutes for a critique was 5 minutes to 9.25 minutes.

Provisional Teachers Instructional Meetings With the Mentor Teacher, the Principal, and the Support Team

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Mentor, 1 or more Mtgs	23(29%) 11(26%)	32(36%)	20(29%)	
Mentor, No Meetings	55(71%) 32(74%)	56(64%)	49(71%)	
Principal, 1 or more Mtgs	22(28%) 10(23%)	24(27%)	20(29%)	
Principal, No Mtgs	56(72%) 33(77%)	64(73%)	49(71%)	
Support Team, 1 or more Mtgs	5(6%) 0(0%)	6(7%)	5(7%)	
Support Team No Meetings	73(94%) 43(100%)	82(93%)	64(93%)	

Table 4

The school district staff responsible for conducting the teacher training program for the alternate route teacher is called the Support Team (New Jersey, 1988). The team is charged to conduct the training/seminar aspect of the program (New Jersey Administrative Code 6:11-5.5). Table 4 represents the number of meetings the alternate route teachers had with individual members of the team and with the whole team. Lines 1 and show that 55 people did not meet once with their mentor while 23 had at least one meeting. Lines 3 and 4 show that 56 people did not meet with their principal while 22 did. Line 5 and 6 show 73 people had no seminar which is required by the Administrative Code while 5 people did.

Provisional Teachers Observation of Other Teachers At Least Once

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4

Obs Tchr	30(39%) 15(35%)	48(55%)	37(53 %)	
Not Obs Tchr	48(61%) 28(65%)	40(45%)	32(47%)	

Table 5

Table 5 shows the number of provisional teachers were able to observe other teachers at least once during a given week. Line 1 shows that in weeks 1 and 3, 30 and 15 provisional teachers observed other teachers. Weeks 2 and 4 show a higher number and percentage with 48 and 37. Line 2 shows that in the first and fourth weeks of the program, the percentage of provisional teachers who did not observe other teachers was over 60%.

Previous Teaching Experience of Provisional Teachers

Total	Yes	No	Yes P/T or Sub	Yes 1+Yr Exp	Total No Exp
134 115(86%)	71(52%)	63(47%)	52(73%)	19(14%)	

Table 6

A second survey was given to Alternate Route instructors in which 134 chose to respond. Table 6 shows that 71 alternate route teachers claimed prior experience and 63 stated that they had no prior teaching experience. Column 4 shows that of the 71 who claimed previous teaching experience, 52(73%) used part-time work and substitute teaching as a basis for previous experience. Column 5 shows that 19(14%) who claimed prior experience had teaching jobs in which they taught for at least one full year. Column 6 shows that 115 (86%) are categorized as having no prior teaching experience based on definition 7(p.4).

Discussion

The data in this study were taken from a large sample of the population, almost one(1) out of every six(6) alternate route teachers in the program. The alternate route teachers taught in wide variety of localities of schools, i.e. urban, suburban and rural; a wide variety of types of schools, private, parochial, and public; and a wide variety of

level and subject matters, pre-k through grade 12 and early childhood, elementary, mathematics, physical and social sciences, language arts, music, art, and foreign languages. The geographic range represents most of New Jersey, north, central, northwest, the shore, and south central. The backgrounds, educational levels, experience, ages, race and ethnicity represent a wide cross-section of the alternate route population. Therefore it is reasonable to generalize the results of this sample to the population.

The New Jersey Administrative Code requires that the alternate route teacher not be permitted to assume full control of a class until after the first twenty days have been completed. Table 1 shows that the Code has been violated for the vast majority of alternate route teachers. In any given week the great majority of alternate route teachers are receiving very minimal supervision. Since this is a key part of their training program, a very large percentage of alternate route teachers are not receiving the minimum training required.

The Handbook (*New Jersey Provisional Teacher Program*, 1988) recommends that an inexperienced teacher not be permitted to teach a full day until the end of the first week. The development of the teacher is to be gradual, with the assumption of regular full-time duties in the fourth week. Table 2 shows us that 62(79%) of the 78 alternate route teachers began teaching full-time in the first week, a clear violation of the Handbook and the intent of the Code. Table 6 data show that only 14% of the alternate route population have the requisite teaching experience, yet 79%, 76%, and 87% of the alternate route teachers are teaching full-time in weeks 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

Table 2 shows that the greatest number of alternate route teachers in any one week of the study to be in compliance with the Code is 6 out of 69. In week 4 no one in the study is in compliance with the Code.

The State Department of Education has stressed the importance of good supervisory practices in "The New Jersey Plan for the Supervision of Instruction" (Cooperman, 1986). The data in Table 6 clearly shows that very few of the good practices are being implemented in the training of alternate route teachers. The mentoring process implemented through supervision is non-existent for the great

majority of alternate route teachers in this study. In the first week only 15 received a pre-observation conference even once, yet from Table 2 it is known that 70 are teaching with 62 teaching full-time. This analysis can be repeated for each week with the same results. It is also evident that 31 alternate route teachers received critiques, yet 70 taught with 62 teaching full-time. Clearly, this aspect of the program is in violation of the Code, the intent of the Code, and the requirements of the New Jersey State Department of Education for good supervisory practices.

Table 4 focused upon the seminar component of the seminar/practicum requirement of the New Jersey Administrative Code. The Code is clear:

> (a) Each state-approved alternative training program shall provide essential knowledge and skills to provisional teachers through a full-time seminar/practicum of no less than 20 days duration which takes place prior to the time at which the provisional teacher takes full responsibility for a classroom. This seminar/practicum shall provide formal instruction in the essential areas for professional study[,] produce basic teaching skills through supervised teaching experiences with students. The seminar and practicum components of the experience shall be integrated and shall include an orientation to the policies, organization, and curriculum of the employing district (6:11-5.5).

Table 4 shows that in the first week 55 alternate route teachers did not meet even once with their mentor, 56 never met their principal, and 73 had no seminar. This is repeated each week until the fourth week when no alternate route teacher had a seminar with the support team. This is in violation of the Code's literal requirements and certain intent.

Conclusions

The primary conclusion which can be drawn is that for the vast majority of alternate route teachers, the training program is very close to non-existent. The program as a whole is clearly in violation of its own training requirements. Were the New Jersey State Department of

Education to have this program assessed by an external accreditation group, the alternate route program would surely fail.

The second conclusion which might be drawn is that school districts are not appropriate institutions to train teachers. This conclusion is not fully warranted. This program is an extreme one in which school districts were left with no direction or support except for a handbook which gave them the requirements. There is sufficient positive experience in collaborative efforts between school districts and institutions of higher education to show that in another type of structure school districts can help to train people to become teachers. The conclusion which might be drawn is that school districts may not be appropriate organizations to be the sole conductor for pre-induction teacher education for the initial certificate.

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